



QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTION NOMINEE

By: Christopher Reinhart, Chief Attorney

COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTION ([CGS §§ 18-80 AND 18-81](#))

- Must be an experienced correctional administrator.
- Administers the Department of Correction's (DOC) institutions, facilities, and activities.
- Establishes custodial and rehabilitative methods and operates community-based programs.
- Responsible for supervising parolees.
- Establishes disciplinary, treatment, education, training, and other services and programs throughout DOC.
- Arranges legal services for indigent inmates within available appropriations.

CURRENT ISSUES

1. Governor Malloy proposes transferring probation services and alternative incarceration programs from the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division to DOC.
 - a. How would DOC integrate these services and programs into the agency? Would anything change about how these services and programs operate?
 - b. Would transferring these services and programs save money and create efficiencies?
2. How have the governor's recent budget recissions affected DOC's programs and services? How will the governor's proposed budget affect the agency? Are any particular programs or duties at risk that concern you?

3. As of February 19, 2015, the prison population stands at 16,203. This month, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) projected a continued decline in the prison population, predicting a 2.6% decrease over the next 12 months.
 - a. Do you think this reduction is achievable?
 - b. What factors do you think are driving the population decline?
 - c. What policies are working well in regard to reducing the prison population? Which could be improved?
 - d. The governor's proposals include closing another prison or wings in multiple facilities. At what population level could this be achieved?
4. Legislation adopted in 2011 and amended in 2013 allows most inmates to earn risk-reduction credits to reduce their sentences, and many of them become eligible for parole sooner, by adhering to their offender accountability plans and participating in education and other programs.
 - a. How do you think the credit program is working?
 - b. Are inmates participating in programs? Do the credits provide an effective incentive to participate in programs? Are there enough program slots available to inmates?
 - c. Have the credits affected inmate behavior?
5. Another law adopted in 2011 allows the DOC commissioner to release a sentenced inmate to home confinement if he or she was sentenced for driving under the influence, certain drug crimes, or certain driving without a license crimes.
 - a. How is this law working? How does DOC ensure an inmate remains in his or her home?
 - b. What criteria does DOC use to determine which inmates to release?
 - c. How many inmates released to home confinement are returned to prison for violating conditions of release or committing new crimes?
 - d. Should more inmates be eligible for home confinement?

6. The prison population continues to age and DOC has an agreement with a private provider to house inmates in a nursing home-type setting in Rocky Hill.
 - a. How many inmates are currently in this facility?
 - b. What criteria does DOC use to determine whether to send an inmate there?
 - c. Have any inmates sent to the facility been returned to prison for violating facility rules or committing new crimes?
 - d. How has DOC responded to concerns about safety raised by people in the community where the facility is located?
7. Provisional pardons and certificates of rehabilitation seek to make it easier for offenders to find jobs after they leave prison. Do you think these documents help offenders? What more could be done to help offenders re-enter and be successful in the community?

PHILOSOPHY

1. There has been a long debate over whether prisons should punish, rehabilitate, or do both. Do you believe that rehabilitation can occur in prison and, if so, could it be done more effectively?
2. What do you think is the most effective way of dealing with the problem of recidivism?
3. Inmates are given, or allowed to use, certain things such as televisions, radios, reading materials, weights, and exercise equipment. Some people believe that inmates should not have them. What is your position?
4. The DOC commissioner has the authority to release prisoners sentenced to two years or less to halfway houses, group homes, mental health facilities, or other community correction programs ([CGS § 18-100c](#)). What is your philosophy about releasing prisoners under this authority?
5. How closely does DOC work with the Board of Pardons and Paroles? Specifically, how closely does DOC work with the board when determining what constitutes an appropriate plan before an inmate's release? Is there more that could be done to prepare inmates for release?

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